# Travel Daily First with the news

Thursday 26th June 2025



### Rego open for USA

**BRAND** USA and United Airlines are taking The Great USA Roadtrip roadshow to three Australian cities for travel agents to attend in Jul (TD 29 May).

Registration is free for events in Perth (HERE), Adelaide (HERE) and the Gold Coast (HERE).







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## MTA labels fine "harsh"

MTA - Mobile Travel Agents has paid a \$16,500 penalty after allegedly breaching the Franchising Code of Conduct.

The ACCC said the travel agency network had failed to meet its obligation to annually update or confirm information on the Franchise Disclosure Register, as required by the franchising code.

When contacted for comment. CEO Don Beattie told Travel Daily the fine was the result of an administrative oversight, and that no franchisees were impacted.

"All prospective members received the current and correct disclosure documents and no one was disadvantaged," Beattie said. But while Beattie conceded

### Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features seven pages of news including our Business Events News page plus a full page from Aurora Expeditions.

there was an oversight from MTA's end, he labelled the penalty "harsh", calling for changes in the way the ACCC should manage similar breaches in the future.

"Our view is that the penalty is disproportionate, we would like to see the ACCC implement automated reminders so others don't face this harsh penalty for a simple error," he said.

In reflecting on the hefty penalty imposed, the ACCC said a franchisor's failure to maintain up-to-date information on the register undermines transparency for prospective franchisees, and also degrades the reliability and integrity of the register. AB

### Cats launches in Fiji

**SOUTH** Sea Cruises Group has launched South Sea Cats, offering new resort transfers and half-day snorkelling adventures in Fiji (TD 03 May 2024), using two new 36-passenger catamarans.



### Win Antarctica trip

**AURORA** Expeditions and LATAM are giving away an Antarctica expedition for two.

The top-selling trade partner with the highest number of bookings and revenue will be in the running to win.

See page eight for details.











### **Mysterious Intrepid**

**INTREPID** Travel has announced a mystery trip, inviting travellers to join a 14-day 'unchartered' expedition in 2026.

Starting in Harare, Zimbabwe and ending in Ile de Mozambique, travellers will need to embrace the unknown as they embark on the unexpected journey.

There are only two departures (Jul and Aug 2026) with 21 spots per trip up for grabs through a ballot system, which is now open. Find out more details HERE.

### **SCENIC° ECLIPSE**

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**EXPEDITION VOYAGES** 2025-2026

East Antarctica



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### Disasters rain on tourism

A SPIKE in natural disasters during the peak Easter travel period led to softer domestic tourism results for the Mar quarter, the debut Domestic Tourism Statistics quarterly report has showed.

Overnight spend for the quarter was down by 7% to \$27.1 billion when compared to the same period last year, as were the number of overnight trips taken, down 2% to 28.8 million.

The report cited flooding in central and North Queensland, Cyclone Alfred, and bushfires in the Grampians as placing a dampener on the results.

Only one territory bucked the national trend, with the NT seeing 34% year-on-year growth in domestic visits for the quarter albeit off a low base - to 200,000.

Of the major state markets, South Australia leaked the most spend, plummeting by 23% to \$1.7 billion, fuelled in part by a 2% drop in trips to 2.1 million.

NSW recorded the biggest spend and visitor numbers -\$8 billion and 10 million trips respectively - but represented a

#### Wu's fresh brochure

**WENDY** Wu Tours has launched its latest China brochure, which showcases refreshed tour formats and expanded regional coverage.

For the first time, all tours are now listed by duration rather than style, allowing Classic and Go Beyond offerings to sit sideby-side for easier comparison.

redesigned airline guide to help them combine tours and flights - see the brochure **HERE**.



marginal decline on last year.

Meanwhile, Victoria saw its spend decrease by almost 10% to \$6.4 billion, and trips taper down by 2% to 8.7 million.

Leisure holidays edged out visiting friends and family as the motivator for interstate trips, accounting for 40% of the total.

Just over a third were for VFR trips, while one in five were for corporate travel reasons. AB

### Members get a Tick

ATIA has gone live with a new national directory to help travellers link up with accredited and trusted travel professionals across the country.

TravelTick is the latest weapon from the industry body to communicate the importance of booking with its accredited membership to Aussie travellers.

ATIA said that with 120,000 consumers visiting its platforms over the past year, it demonstrated the clear demand for trusted travel providers.

All ATIA-accredited businesses have been pre-loaded into the directory, with members invited to update profiles with images, descriptions, niche specialisations and service information.

"In light of recent nonaccredited businesses entering insolvency, it has never been more important to make it easier for people to find our members," ATIA CEO Dean Long said.

Access TravelTick HERE. AB

### Siem Reap flight ban

TOURISTS in Thailand can no longer fly to Siem Reap from anv Thai airport, as military tensions over border territories between the two Asian nations escalate.

The move is a blow to Aussie travellers looking to bolt on a trip to major attractions in Cambodia, such as Angkor Wat.

Thailand has also moved to block any land crossings to Cambodia, with extra military checkpoints in action to ensure the ban is adhered to.



# Agents will also find a



### Our 2026 best-selling tours are here!

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### ATIA elects two new faces to the board

**TWO** new directors have joined the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) board, with BCD Travel President Asia Pacific, Africa & Middle East Greg O'Neil (pictured) and Corporate Travel Management (CTM) CEO Jo Sully both elected following an AGM (*TD* breaking news yesterday).

The latest board elections also returned Travellers Choice CEO Christian Hunter as Chair, and Flight Centre Travel Group chief Graham Turner and TTC's Toni Ambler as Vice Chairs.

The other directors re-elected were Helloworld Executive Director Cinzia Burnes and Webjet Group MD Katrina Barry.

O'Neil said joining the ATIA board is part of BCD Travel's commitment to support the broader corporate travel industry.

"ATIA is the driving voice for our sector and we look forward to contributing to the board's efforts to support members, uphold



high standards, and help deliver on the Association's strategic objectives," O'Neil said.

Meanwhile, Jo Sully takes over CTM representation on the board from Managing Director Jamie Pherous, stating he is keen to contribute to ATIA's future A30 strategy in his new position.

"A30 lays out an ambitious and necessary roadmap for strengthening our industry from workforce development to consumer confidence, and I look forward to being part of the board's work in delivering meaningful outcomes," Sully said.

Outgoing director Pherous

added he is excited that Sully will provide a leading contribution to addressing "the major challenges our industry must overcome".

The other departing director is former ATIA Vice Chair and outgoing American Express Global Business Travel Vice President of SME Asia Pacific, Danielle Russom, who can no longer serve as she transitions to a new role at a yet-to-be-revealed company.

Reflecting on her time with the ATIA board, Russom said her personal highlight was launching A30, which she believes will be a strong growth foundation.

Continuing on the board before an election next year are: The Travel Corporation MD for ANZ Toni Ambler; Intrepid Travel MD ANZ Brett Mitchell; Helloworld Group GM for Consolidation Rohan Moss; Director, CT Partners Director Peter Muller; and FCTG General Manager Mergers and Acquisitions David Smith. AB

#### **Eurostar troubles**

AROUND 600 metres of cable along train tracks in northern France have been stolen, resulting in major delays and lastminute cancellations to Eurostar trips between Paris and London.

Eurostar's website shows six trips between the two major European capitals were scrapped, with workers dispatched to solve the issue.

The theft is likely to impact services for at least 24 hours.

#### Air NZ touches down

AIR New Zealand has landed at Sunshine Coast Airport, marking the resumption of its seasonal services to Auckland.

The Kiwi carrier will operate the route three times a week until 24 Oct, providing 17,000 seats.

Air NZ is now in its 12th year of offering the seasonal service, which provides Queenslanders with an extra way to visit places like North America via Auckland.





### **Bratton reunites Orion band**

A LITANY of employees from Orion Expedition Cruises have returned in various roles to support their former boss Sarina Bratton and her recently launched venture, Pearl Expeditions.

Leading the Orion brigade is Head of Sustainability Mick Fogg, who has also taken on the duties of General Manager and will gradually become CEO.

Fogg worked at Orion as its Expedition Leader and Consultant from the company's formation in 2003 through to its acquisition by Lindblad Expeditions in 2013.

Handling the company's marketing will be now UK-based

#### ATIA correction

**YESTERDAY** *TD* incorrectly reported that ATIA has welcomed new board member Greg O'Neil, former LaTrobe boss (*TD* breaking news yesterday) - O'Neil is President at BCD Travel.



Chris Perkins, who served as Sales and Marketing Director at Orion for nearly five years.

Communications in the brand's early days are being handled by Michael Corbett, who was coaxed out of retirement by Bratton, with the pair working together for nearly three decades.

In the sales department will be Joanna Schuetz, who served as Head of Reservations at Orion and will be based in Mudgee.

Bratton has even reconnected with the team at Rescompany Systems (Resco), who provided the booking CRS for Orion, with many of the team still there.

Pearl Expeditions will employ Resco's CruisePAL system to facilitate its reservation needs. *ML*  Travel Daily
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KNOWLEDGE ON
MONACO WITH
TRAVEL DAILY
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### Expedia winter sale

**AGENTS** can enjoy savings of up to 25% on hotels worldwide in Expedia TAAP's 2025 Winter Sale, which kicked off today.

"This is a valuable opportunity to start the second half of a year strong, with unbeatable savings on hotel stays worldwide," the company said.

Bookings are open now and can be made until 21 Jul for travel through 31 Oct.

#### **VA links PER-DOH**

**VIRGIN** Australia is now flying from Perth to Doha as part of its return to long-haul international flying with partner Qatar Airways.

Perth is now the third city to be activated under the deal, following Sydney and Brisbane, while services from Melbourne will take off from Dec.

To celebrate, Virgin is offering up to 15% off fares to Doha and selected onward destinations for bookings made by 30 Jun.



**TOURIST** attractions come in all shapes and sizes, even inside an abandoned aircraft.

Two brothers from El Paso, Texas stumbled upon the Boeing 727 and embarked on a mission to turn it into the city's newest social hotspot.

The unused aircraft had been sitting in a hangar at El Paso Airport for the past 20 years.

After purchasing it for US\$10,000, the boys are set to relocate and refurbish the aircraft interior into a new visual attraction which they plan to call 'Hangar Hangout'.

The aircraft was previously owned by a charter aviation company, with storage payments stopping due to the owner perishing, somewhat ironically, in a plane crash.



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# **QR CEO** reassures pax

**QATAR** Airways Group CEO Badr Mohammed Al-Meer has shared an open letter with the general public, including passengers and the airline's global teams, to reassure and thank them for their patience and support during the suspension of its global operations this week, due to conflict in the Middle East.

On Mon, Qatari airspace was suddenly closed, followed by the closure of Hamad International Airport and a missile attack by Iran on Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

Flights were subsequently diverted and departures were suspended as the airline immediately implemented synchronised global operations, while continuity plans were later activated, said Al-Meer.

"The priority for us was clear: to care for our passengers impacted by the unprecedented situation that continued to unfold, and to restore our global operations as safely and swiftly as possible," Al-Meer reflected.

Over 4,600 Qatar Airways customers were provided with accommodation, many of whom received onward boarding passes for rescheduled flights.

The airline also increased capacity to some destinations to cater for displaced passengers and a flexible travel policy was established to help passengers make changes or refund their bookings without fees.



group stepped into transit areas to assist passengers directly; rebooking journeys; prioritising medical cases; supporting families and elderly travellers; and manually rebuilding complex travel itineraries, some involving other airlines, and expired visas," Al-Meer wrote.

The QR leader also expressed his deep appreciation for the airline's teams and partners across the world.

"Faced with an extraordinary challenge, we came together to support our passengers, recover our network, and return our operations to normal," he said.

"The professionalism and unity on display reflect the very best of what our airline group and our partners stand for."

Last week, Qatar Airways was voted as World's Best Airline for

### the ninth year in a row at the "Teams from across the airline Skytrax Awards in Paris. JHM Summer 2026 **Early Birds OUT NOW!** DISCOVER MORE





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### Three new Kings

**AAT** Kings has bolstered its sales team with three new appointments: Desiree Sevinder as Sales Manager Victoria/ Tasmania & Groups; Janeen Harris as Sales Manager Queensland; and Alla Ribeiro as Key Account Manager ITO, OTA & SEIT.

Sevinder and Harris will manage sales leads across their states, while the former will also take on group allocations, as well as driving Small Group product and Inspiring Journeys tours.

Meanwhile, Ribeiro will be responsible for managing and developing relationships with key distribution partners, negotiating agreements and driving sales growth through these channels.

"We're committed to investing in and building a strong management team, especially with the recent launch of our small group tours, so we're thrilled that these talented managers with exceptional industry experience have joined us as we continue to drive sales growth," Chief Exec Ben Hall said.

### ANA Trip.com in Oz

TRIP.COM and All Nippon Airways have expanded their air ticket sales market through the extension of its NDC-based ticket sales partnership to Australia.

The OTA will now distribute NDC-based tickets for ANA in 12 markets globally, with other regions including Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

This is in addition to Japan, where the initial deal between ANA and Trip.com was struck.

The enhanced service allows customers in new markets booking ANA flights on Trip.com to access a wider range of fares.

This includes the same prices and reservation services offered on the ANA website, as well as key post-booking actions such as itinerary changes and refunds.

#### GFOB adds to Asia

**GLOBUS** is charting a new course through India with its new 'Heritage of India & the Ganges River' cruise and tour.

The new itinerary offers travellers a cruise on the sacred Ganges, with other highlights including a rickshaw ride through Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk market, and a sunset and sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal.

Also new for next year from Globus is the 'Enchanting Thailand' tour, which visits floating markets, tea plantations, temples, as well as elephant observations and river cruises.

Meanwhile, Globus' sister brand Cosmos is also expanding its value-minded collection with a new 'Colours of India's Golden Triangle & Rajasthan' tour.

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NT is on pole
MORE than 40,000

attendances were recorded

last weekend for the Darwin

Triple Crown Supercars race.

NT Major Events Company

Luxton said the race's benefits

"The benefits are immense

- not just from the thousands

but also through competitors

of visitors who travel here,

**Executive Director Aimee** 

to the region's tourism and

events sector are huge.

at Hidden Valley Raceway

### **CVENT'S NEW SMALL EVENT SOLUTION**

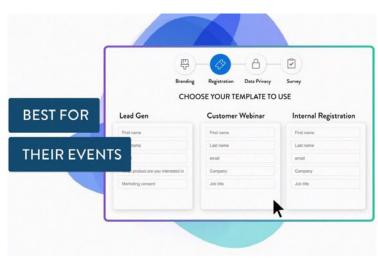
**CVENT** has announced Cvent Essentials, a new solution purpose-built for small, repeatable, in-person events.

The new product, built through extensive feedback, is designed to help teams scale their programs with speed and consistency.

Early adopter testing has found Cvent Essentials is already driving measurable results, and transforming how teams execute high-volume, in-person experiences, particularly for frequent gatherings like field marketing activations, internal meetings, client trainings, executive networking experiences, and more.

The new solution is now available to all Cvent customers.

Vice President of Product Management McNeel Keenan said Cvent Essentials is purposebuilt to help tenured event professionals set clear guidelines and easy-to-use event templates,



without the complexity or cost of traditional management tools.

"Essentials was built for the often overlooked, but critically important, category of smaller events," he said.

"It helps teams say 'yes' to more event requests without sacrificing brand consistency or data visibility. "For many organisations, that means freeing up valuable time and resources to focus on flagship experiences - like annual conferences or major customer events - while still maintaining control and capturing impact from the hundreds of smaller, high-frequency events that often fly under the radar." MS

# and crew who explore and enjoy [the NT]," she said.

Hello to Cairns

**CAIRNS** Convention Centre will host Helloworld Travel's Owner Manager Conference next year.

The agency network has partnered with Tourism & Events Queensland (TEQ) for the conference, which will take place from 11-14 Jun.

The announcement was made on the closing day of this year's OMC, which recently wrapped up in Vancouver (*TD* 12 Jun).

The news was welcomed by top brass from around the Queensland tourism industry.

"Showcasing tourism in Tropical North Queensland, we will be inviting everyone to experience 'That Holiday Feeling'," TEQ CEO Craig Davidson said.

### Face-to-face meetings can boost revenue, Accor has found

**NEW** research has discovered in-person meetings boost revenue by more than a third, revealing the significance of face-to-face events.

Accor Hotels Sydney Olympic Park found some companies could see up to a 36% increase in revenue by prioritising inperson meetings for critical business moments.

The hotelier found an



impressive 85% of professionals report financial gains from meeting in-person, especially for high stakes activities such as client engagement and renegotiating contracts.

"At Pullman, Novotel & ibis at Sydney Olympic Park, we recognise that digital interactions cannot replace in-person meetings when it comes to fostering true human connection," said General Manager Benjamin Nesbitt.

"We pride ourselves on offering premium events and conference facilities."



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### **APPOINTMENTS**

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Emerging Travel Group has named Astrid Kastberg as the General Manager of RateHawk, amid the rapid growth of the B2B booking system. She joins the business with decades of experience in travel management and technology across the EMEA region, having most recently held the role of general manager at leisure wholesaler Yalago.

There is a new Chief Executive Officer of Palmer Hospitality Group, with **Hugo Burton** now running the company. The hospitality executive has more than 20 years of experience, having previously held senior roles at GM Hotels.

W Hotels has appointed Paul Andarakis as Director of Sales & Marketing of its W Sydney property. The experienced hospitality leader will join the team this month, marking his return to the Marriott family, where he previously worked for more than 10 years.

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has strengthened its Residences and Exceptional Homes team with two strategic appointments. Brad Berry will join as Head of Residences & Homes, while Philip Leighton will take on the role of Head of Mandarin Oriental Exceptional Homes. Berry brings more than 25 years of global experience in branded residential development and luxury real estate, having most recently served as Vice President Global Residential Development at Rosewood Hotel Group. Leighton brings more than 20 years in the luxury travel and hospitality sector, and comes from Villas by Bailey Robinson, where he launched and led the brand.

Business Events Industry Aotearoa Chief Executive Officer Lisa Hopkins has joined the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Regional Advisory Board for a two-year term. Hopkins was formerly a PCMA Advisory Board member for six-and-a-half years, a term which concluded three years ago.

Duetto has announced a chief executive officer transition, as the company enters its next phase of growth. The revenue management software company thanked David Woolenberg for his six years of leadership, as he makes way for Alex Zoghlin, who will be the new head of the business. Woolenberg will remain with Duetto during the transitional period to ensure continuity and support the handover.

A number of new board appointees have been made at **Reflections** Holidays, including tourism veteran and Destination Sydney Surrounds South Chair Lyndel Gray. Also joining the board will be former New South Wales Minister for Tourism Adam Marshall, and former shadow Minister for Crown Lands Mick Veitch.

Brighton Coaches & Tours has announced Richard McKisack as its newly appointed Sales & Product Development Manager. He will be responsible for growing its existing Sydney Day Tours business.



# Accor leaders gather



**HOTEL** operator Accor has wrapped up its 2025 Pacific Leaders Conference, which brought together 350 of its general managers and regional leaders to the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre.

During the two-day event, attendees enjoyed keynote sessions, as well as workshops, thought leadership forums, business deep dives and a supplier hub.

Key topics at the conference focused on people and culture; loyalty; brand; commercial strategy; responsible hospitality; and operational excellence.

Group Deputy CEO Jean-Jacques Morin discussed with attendees the evolving travel landscape and how the business is progressing across the world

Patrick Laurent, CFO for the business' premium, midscale and economy division, shared a global financial perspective on performance strategy and investment priorities.

Meanwhile, Global Brand Presidents Benoit Racle and Jean-Yves Minet explained the evolution of each brand and how they are responding to travellers' needs and desires.

On the final day, Australian Paralympic gold medallist Curtis McGrath shared his story of resilience and service - and how it can inspire business leaders to reflect on the impact of their own work. JHM

### Big Qld budget win

**THE** Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) has applauded the state's latest annual budget for stumping up \$1 billion to fund the visitor economy and commitment to its Destination 2045 strategy.

A core part of the budget is a \$446m injection into the state's tourism strategy, including \$200m for product development and aviation attraction; \$146m to support Tourism and Events Queensland; and \$100m to secure global events.

It also included more than \$200m to support the workforce and training pathways, as well as \$43.5m to grow ecotourism experiences; increased funding for regional tourism organisations; and investments in road & rail infrastructure to improve access ahead of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

# Travel Daily

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\*Terms and conditions apply: The exclusive incentive is open to active travel advisors in Australia and New Zealand, and we reserve the right to alter the prize should this not be available to purchase in your country of residence. The promotion is only available to active travel advisors, who book and deposit an Aurora expedition in conjunction with LATAM flights. LATAM flights can be booked separately with PNR details to be provided to Aurora Expeditions to be eligible. Promotion is subject to voyage availability at time of booking and is not combinable with any other incentive programs or offer. The prize will be awarded to the travel advisor who makes the highest number of bookings and revenue. The prize consists of an Antarctic expedition on the Antarctic Explorer 12-day voyage departing 17-28 March 2026 for 2 people accommodated in a twin stateroom on board the Sylvia Earle. The cruise prize is non-transferrable or redeemable for cash. Inclusions & exclusions are as outlined on the Aurora Expeditions website per chosen voyage. Optional activities will be at an additional cost and are subject to availability on request. Airfares and taxes are included and only available for departures from Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland to Punta Arenas and returning from Buenos Aires and on a LATAM operated aircraft. Flights to/from other cities (domestic or international) are at additional cost. Guest must travel together and be booked in the same stateroom and are limited to one guest per travel advisor. All bookings are subject to our full terms and conditions and must agree and sign our Code of Conduct policy. Offer is valid for new bookings made from 01 June to 30 September 2025. The winner will be notified via email on 8 October 2025. The winner will have 7 days to accept the prize and 30 days to confirm their booking. For more information contact your Aurora Expeditions Sales Director or Sales Support salessupport@auroraexpeditions.com.au

